

2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Faulkner Legal

United Educators Prevention and Protection Podcast: Reducing Risk Around Contrapower Harassment on Campus Podcast

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Prevention
 - a. Anti-Sexual Harassment Education
2. Response
 - a. Addressing Gender Harassment Disrespect
 - b. Transparency and Communication

Contrapower harassment involves situations where there's a shifted power dynamic. A person with less power attempts to exert control or influence over someone with more authority or status. The term frequently refers to situations where a student allegedly threatens or harasses a faculty member or administrator. Faulkner Legal collaborated with United Educators to produce a podcast on contrapower harassment.

1. Prevention – Research on contrapower harassment suggests that harassers often begin harassment by testing their target, then escalating their conduct. They further escalate the impact of their conduct by contacting the target's superiors or threatening to do so. Anecdotal information suggests that some targets of contrapower harassment, particularly in certain academic job categories, may not recognize this conduct as contrapower harassment, or realize that it is reportable as harassment. Managers or senior academic leaders also may not recognize the alleged conduct is potentially actionable contrapower harassment. One goal of the podcast is to raise awareness that alleged conduct is harassment which can and should be addressed in the same manner as other types of harassment. If members of the academic community recognize contrapower harassment in its early stages, potential contrapower harassment can be prevented or stopped more quickly. Institutions of higher education also should cover this topic in teaching workshops and onboarding, or other workplace training,
2. Response – As mentioned above, targets, supervisors, or supervising academic leaders may not recognize problematic conduct as contrapower harassment. Academic leaders also face competing pressures when addressing student complaints or faculty reports. The podcast addresses types of responses which may exacerbate potential harassment, and the types of responses and support which may address and eliminate harassing

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conduct. The podcast also explains what types of university procedures may serve as resources for individuals who may be facing contrapower harassment.

Description of Work:

Faulkner Legal developed a podcast with United Educators to bring attention to the issue of contrapower harassment on campus and provide guidance on how to prevent and address such harassment on campus. The goal of the podcast was to raise awareness of this type of harassment, highlight misunderstandings about the phenomenon, and discuss the resources and responsibilities of supervisors and administrators about how to support faculty and staff who may be experiencing contrapower harassment.

Contrapower harassment was covered in a powerful presentation by Alicia Andrzejewski during the [Action Collaborative's 2022 Public Summit](#). The presentation made clear that higher education institutions need to recognize contrapower harassment when it arises and provide support for faculty members who may face contrapower harassment. Additional research showed that there currently are few resources available on contrapower harassment, but the topic may be an emerging one. There are some researchers who have conducted research on the topic, and it also has been a subject of some recent student notes. The topic has received some recent coverage in higher education news publications, relating to faculty and staff. Challenges in addressing contrapower harassment may be exacerbated by the fact that adjunct faculty members or other members of a university community may not be aware of which office(s) may provide assistance if contrapower harassment arises. Similarly, supervisors, department chairs, and deans may not realize the potential impact which contrapower harassment may have on an individual, including but not limited to whether they wish to continue an academic career. The podcast is designed to bring attention to the issue and provide some practical suggestions for how to respond to and address contrapower harassment.

The podcast was released in March 2024. It is publicly available through United Educators' website; Faulkner Legal's website; Spotify, Apple Music; and other podcast venues. The United Educators podcast webpage cites the NASEM Action Collaborative's 2022 Public Summit as a resource and provides a link to Dr. Andrzejewski's presentation.

Website for further information (if applicable):

www.faulknerlegal.com; <https://faulknerlegal.com/education-activities>; <https://www.ue.org/risk-management/the-workplace/reducing-risk-around-contrapower-harassment-on-campus/>

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